United Nations

Press Release

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General in Paris hears report on humanitarian assistance for Iraqi civilians; holds talks with French and other officials.

- Sadruddin Aga Khan says Iraqi cooperation with United Nations humanitarian efforts is "important" -- now to be "translated into action".

- Spokesman for United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission reports of continuing deployment of personnel.

- World Children's Day to be celebrated at Headquarters under the theme "Lend me a hand, let's build a bright, clean land".

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar held a special private meeting today in Paris to hear a report from Sadruddin Aga Khan, his Executive Delegate, who has just returned from Iraq, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Iraqi Government. During the meeting, Sadruddin Aga Khan informed the heads of the United Nations system present in Paris for the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) meetings of the urgent need for a coordinated action for humanitarian help to the civilian populations in Iraq, including returnees and displaced persons.

The Secretary-General also met with French Prime Minister Michel Rocard on the situation in Iraq and the United Nations role in humanitarian efforts in that country. During the meeting, the Prime Minister and the Secretary-General also discussed the situation in Cambodia, Western Sahara, Cyprus, the situation in Africa and the financial situation of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General also met with Pietre Kravchenko, Foreign Minister of Byelorussia. He was scheduled to hold talks later today with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General met with Edwige Avice, Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of the Foreign Ministry in the absence of Foreign Minister

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Dumas. The discussions focused on the situation in Iraq and the Kurdish problem.

The Secretary-General is presiding over the current ACC session in Paris.

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The agreement signed yesterday in Baghdad on cooperation between Iraq and the United Nations on humanitarian emergency assistance to Iraqi refugees was now to be translated into action, Sadruddin Aga Khan said today in Geneva.

Sadruddin Aga Khan, the Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General to coordinate a United Nations inter-agency humanitarian programme for Iraq, Kuwait and the Turkish and Iranian border areas, was briefing correspondents on his recent trip to Iraq.

Referring to the humanitarian centres to be set up by the United Nations, he said it was still too early to say how many centres would be needed. However, he said, that would "remain an empty shell" unless the millions of dollars which were needed for the operation were provided by bilateral sources.

An additional $400 million had to be added to the amounts already announced for the United Nations humanitarian programmes in the region, since the situation was constantly evolving, he said.

Asked whether the United Nations staff in the region intended to cooperate with the allies in their relief efforts, Sadruddin Aga Khan said the Organization was "in touch with what was being done there". There had to be liaison and contacts between the different groups, he added.

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The spokesman for the United Nations Iraq Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) stated today that Major General Greindl, UNIKOM's Chief Military Observer, and an advance party had visited the demilitarized zone for reconnaissance, and since then, the deployment of the force had been continuing progressively.

In a statement issued at Headquarters, he said most of the 300 military observers were expected to have arrived in the area by this weekend. The temporary deployment of infantry companies from other existing peace-keeping operations (the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)) would begin on Monday, 22 April, he said. The bulk of UNIKOM personnel were expected to arrive in the mission area in the middle of next week.

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More than 1,000 children from over 100 countries will gather in the United Nations General Assembly this Sunday, 21 April, to celebrate "World Children's Day" under the theme "Lend a hand, let's build a bright, clean

land". The children, aged 6 to 12, will present the work they are doing in their respective countries to improve the environment.

The event, organized by the non-governmental organization, World Children's Day Foundation, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), will take place in the spirit of the World Summit for Children (New York, 29-30 September 1990) when world leaders vowed their "solemn commitment to give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection".

Child delegates from the six initiating countries -- Canada, Egypt, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan and Sweden -- will circulate a petition, which will be signed by all the children, asking Heads of State about the goals for children that have been achieved so far, six months after the Summit.

The celebration of World Children's Day at the United Nations was started in 1986 by two Turkish-American students from the Ataturk School in New York who wrote a letter to the children of the world asking them to join together to create a better future. Since then more than 4,000 children from 137 countries have participated in World Children's Day at the United Nations.

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